

REMARKS

Claims 1-12, 21-23, 25-40, and 50-87 are pending. Claim 57 has been amended. Support for the amendment can be found at page 31, lines 28-30.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) that was submitted electronically on 30 Sep 2004, appears to have not yet been considered. A copy of this IDS is attached to this amendment.

Drawings

Figs. 5 and 6 have been amended as suggested by the Examiner. For Fig. 10, the labels 101, 138, 140, and 134 have been added to the specification. In Figs. 12a and 12b A and B shims are now labeled. The specification has been amended to add “1000.” The labels 180, 182, 184, and 186 have been deleted from Fig. 13. In Fig. 14c, 202 has been added; “228” has been deleted from the specification.

In Fig. 11a and 11b, “164” was deleted and “172” was added to the specification. The specification (p 31, line 12) has also been amended to reference “360.”

A petition to accept the color drawing is attached.

Claim Objection

Claim 57 has been amended to complete the claim.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1, 6, 7, 10, 22, 23, 54, 58, 74, and 75 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by WO 99/00186 (Tonkovich et al.).

Independent claims 1, 22 and 58 are patentable over WO 99/00186 because these claims recite apparatus capable of or methods in which a first unit operation is again performed on the stream. This feature is not described in WO 99/00186. Specifically, in WO'186, the unit operation performed in chamber 114 is receiving heat, i.e., heating, whereas the unit operation performed in chamber 108 is giving heat, i.e., cooling. As set forth in the definition of “unit operation” on page 7 of the present application, heating and cooling are clearly different unit operations.

Claims 1, 22 and 58 are further patentable over WO 99/00186 because these claims either (1) a microcomponent device and a processing device or (2) first and second devices. It is clear from the descriptions in the specification (for example, page 28, line 24) that the term “device”, in the context of these claims¹, is not merely a layer in a laminated device. WO 99/00186 does not describe apparatus or methods with multiple devices.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 22, 23, 54 and 58 is respectfully requested.

Claim 6 recites a “continuous flow microchannel” in a first layer and a flow microchannel in a second layer, “wherein said first layer and said second layer cooperate to form at least two unit operations; and wherein said continuous flow microchannel forms at least a portion of said at least two unit operations.” An example of such apparatus is described on page 30 of the specification. WO 99/00186 does not describe a continuous flow microchannel in a layer that

¹ Other compatible uses of “device” occur at page 6, lines 29-30, page 26, line 2, and page 31, line 31. The term “separator device” at page 12, line 24 has a meaning different than “device” as used in the claims and elsewhere in the specification.

forms at least a portion of at least two unit operations which operate between first and second layers. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 6, 7, 10, 74 and 75 is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

If the Examiner has any questions or would like to speak to Applicants' representative, the Examiner is encouraged to call Applicants' attorney at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Amendments to the Drawings

A complete set of formal drawings (28 sheets) is attached to replace the originally filed claims.

The attached replacement Figs. 5, 6, 11a, 12a, 12b, 13a, and 14c have been revised to correct various informalities. These sheets replace the original Figs. 5, 6, 11a, 12a, 12b, 13a, and 14c. A corresponding set of red-lined drawings of Figs. 6, 11a, 12a, 12b, 13a, and 14c is also attached. The changes are discussed in the remarks section below.

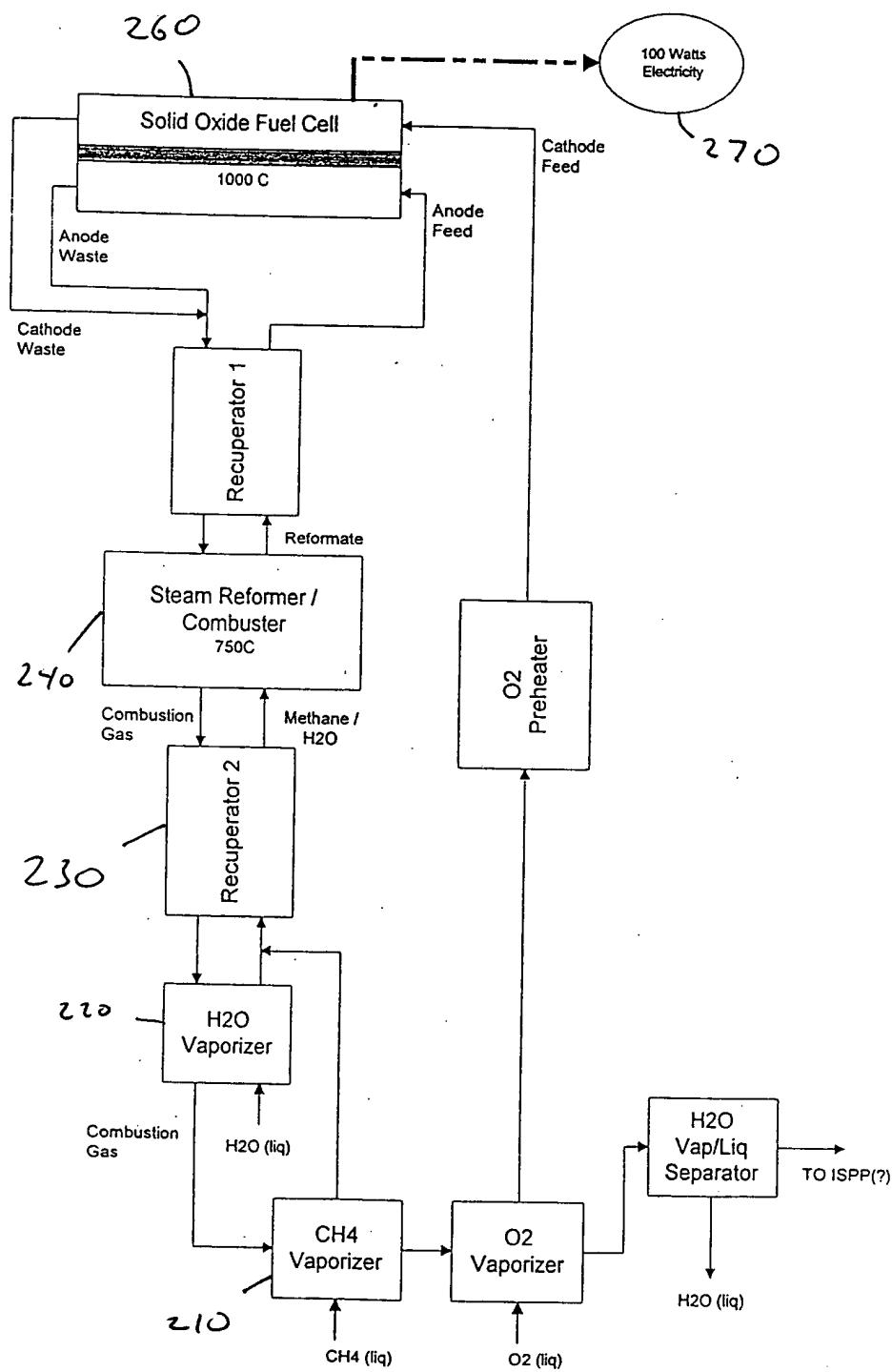


Fig. 5

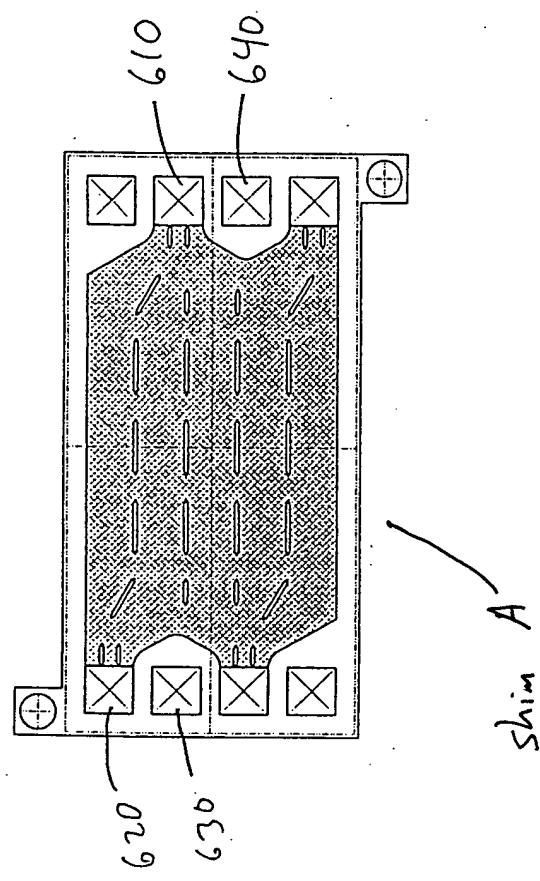


Fig. 6

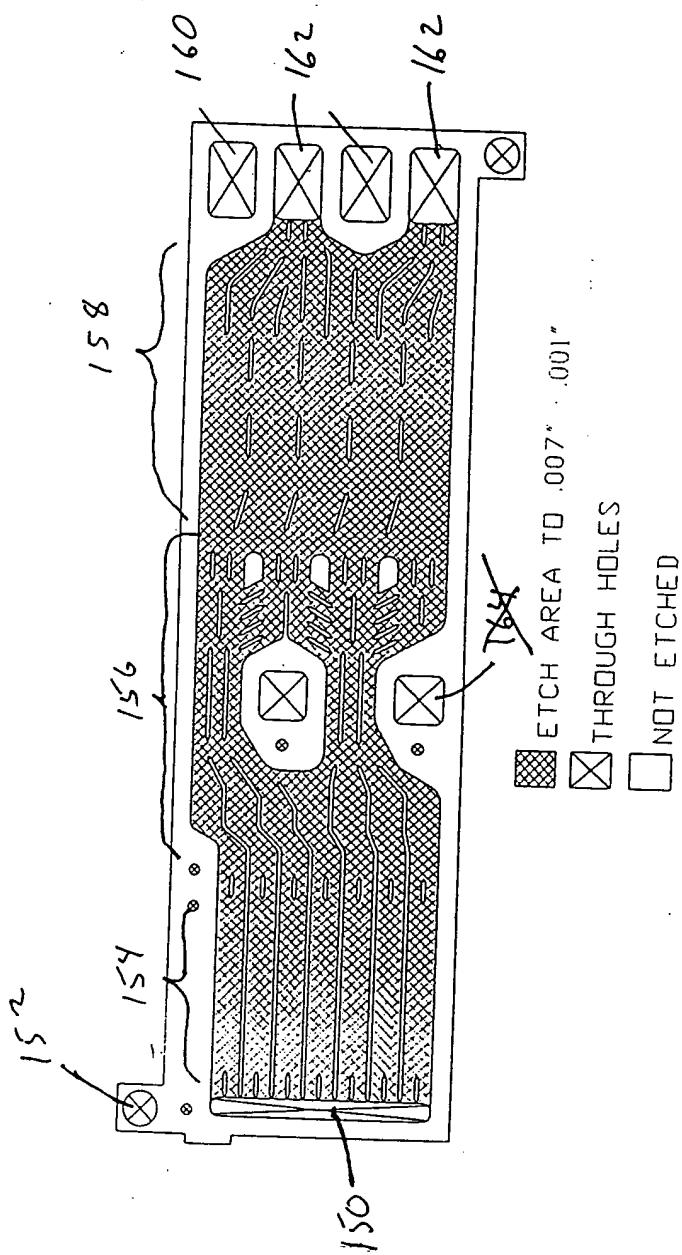


Fig. 11a

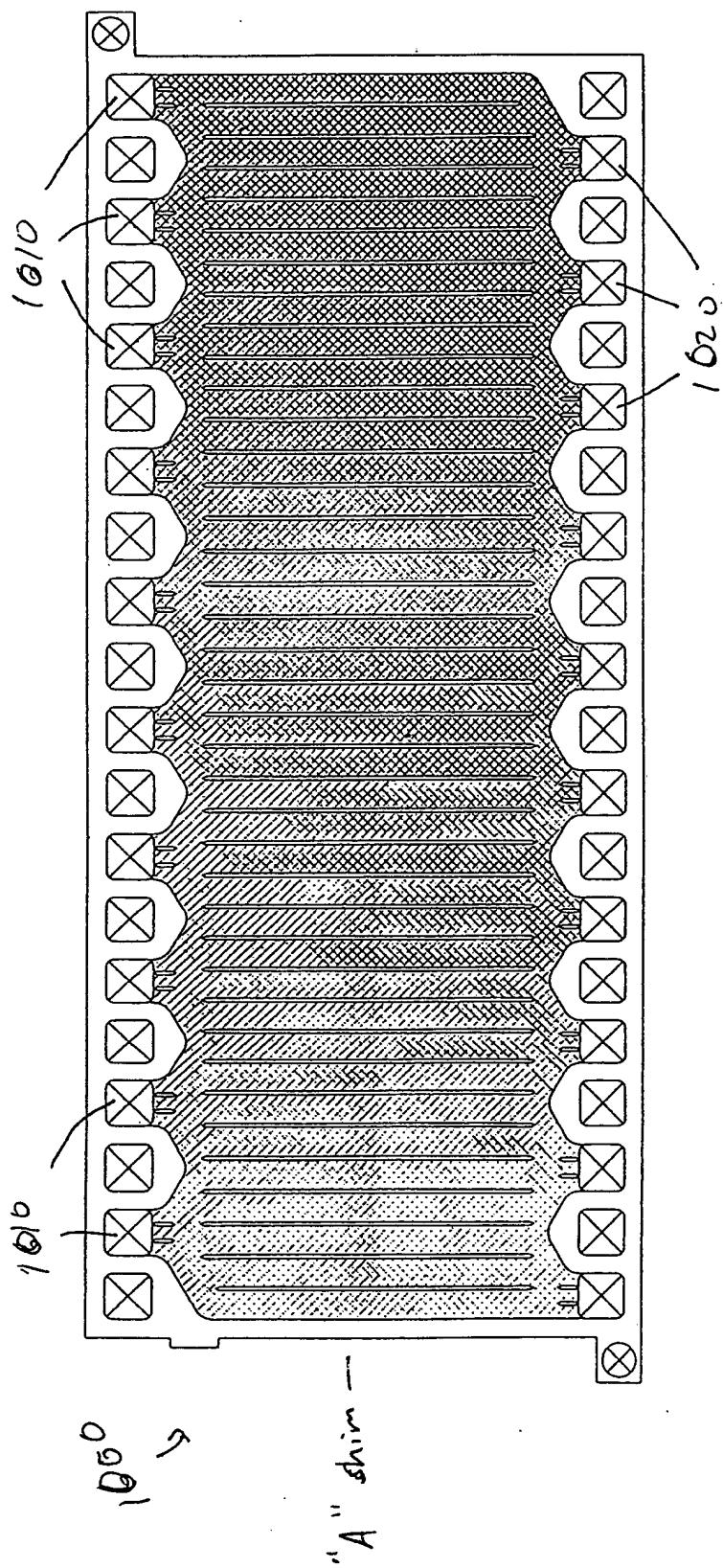


Fig 12 a

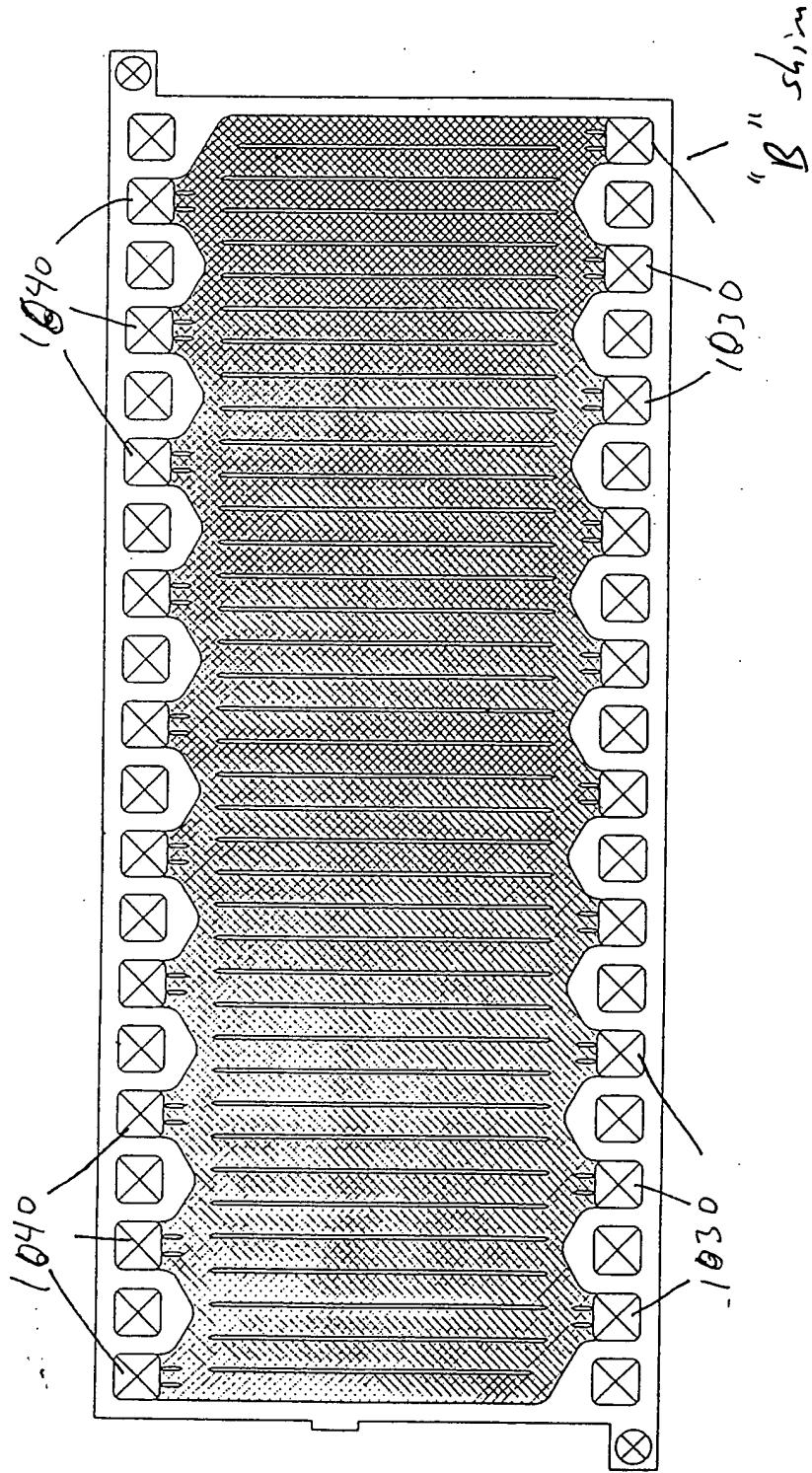


Fig. 12b

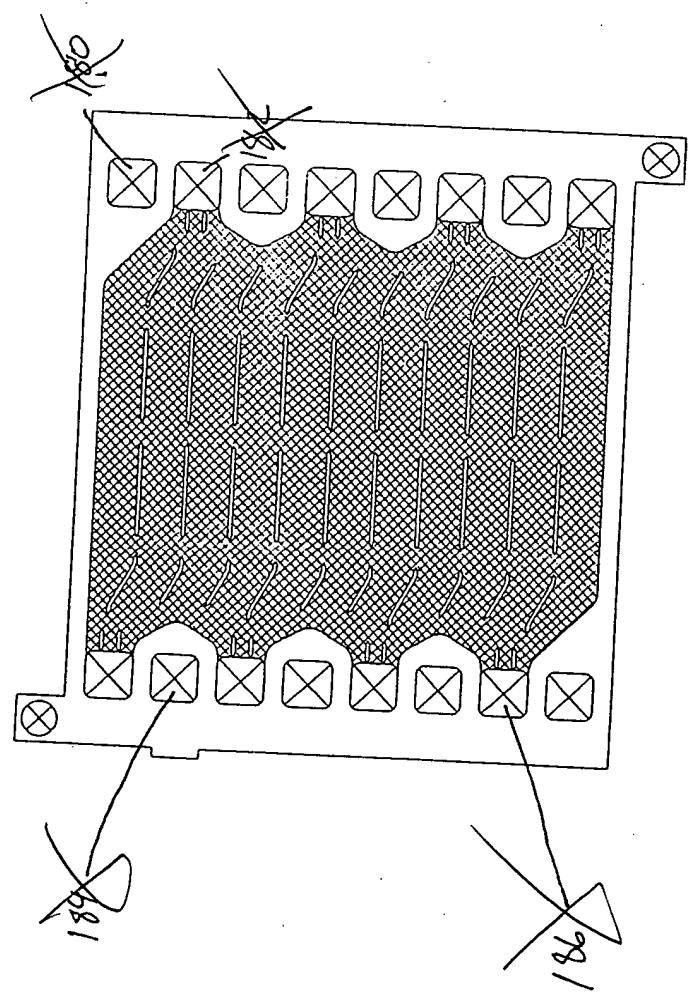


Fig. 13a

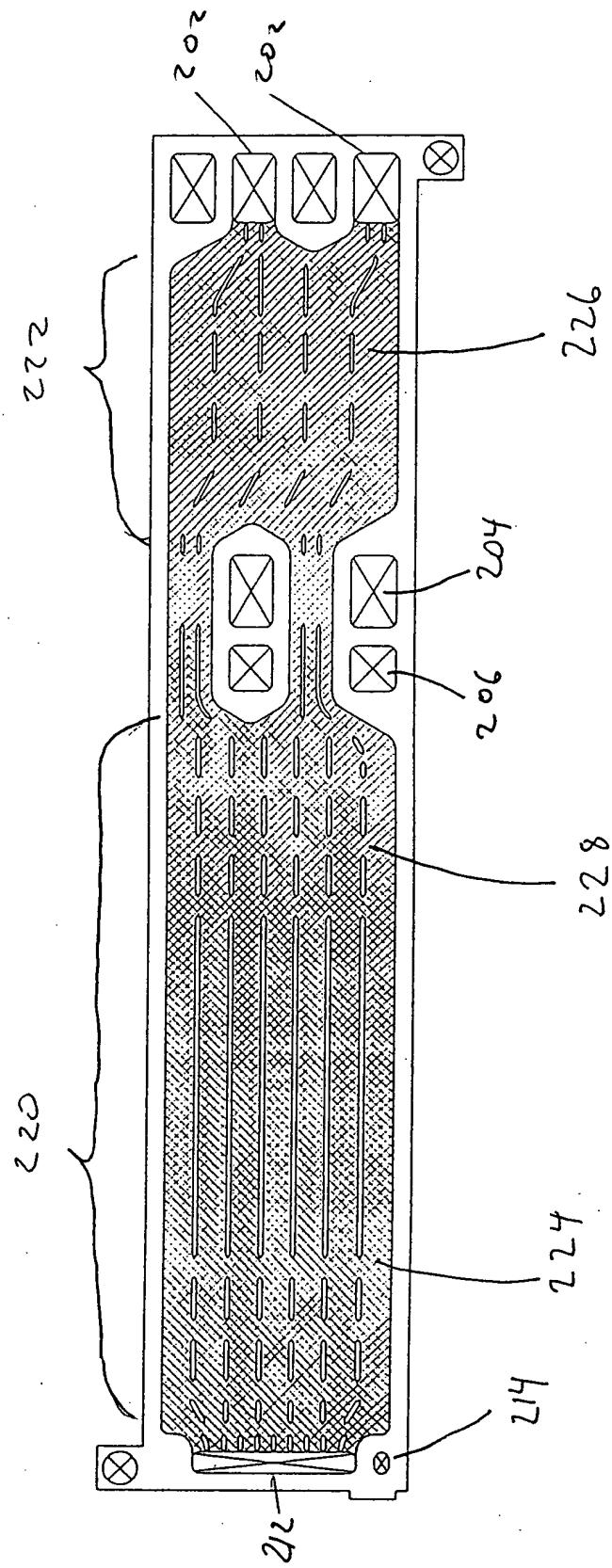


Fig. 14 c.